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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday,

★ JAN 14 1937 ★
U. S. Department of Agriculture
January 20, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "INEXPENSIVE CAKE FOR WINTER." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Listeners, one of the most interesting and timely questions of the week missed our regular question-and-answer day yesterday. So it is to have all the attention today.

The question comes from a thrifty housekeeper who writes that she is cooking for what seem to be a family of "cake-eaters." She explains that cake is the big favorite for dessert in her family, far outranking the usual American favorites -- pie and ice cream. But when the price of eggs goes up, this appetite for cake is pretty hard on the food budget. So she has the problem of finding cakes that are not so expensive, good cakes that don't call for too many eggs which she can make instead of sponge cake or angel food or the light butter cakes that she makes in seasons when eggs are less expensive.

As soon as I read that letter, all kinds of thrifty cakes began to appear in my mind. I thought first of those so-called "cakes" that call for no eggs at all -- apple-sauce cake, eggless cup-cakes and coffee cakes, for example. And then I thought of that group of cakes that are more on the order of sweet muffins than cakes -- call for few eggs and are generally mixed by the muffin method. Gingerbread and certain kinds of molasses and spice cake belong to this group. So does one-egg cake. And cottage pudding.

All these cakes are most delicious served very fresh. They usually taste best if served hot -- right from the oven. And those that are not specially flavored with spice or molasses often have more character if you serve them with some special sauce. For example, hot chocolate sauce on cottage pudding.

As I said, there are some good mixtures that go by the name of cake yet require no eggs at all. Apple-sauce cake is one of these -- and a delicious one. It is a mixture of flour, sugar, fat, apple-sauce and soda, with raisins, salt and spices for seasoning. That's all. No egg. No baking powder. This is not a light fluffy cake, you understand. It is a form of fruit cake -- inexpensive and good when eaten fresh.

Come to think of it, maybe you'd like me to run over the Bureau-of-Home Economics directions for apple-sauce cake. You can compare this recipe with your own, if you have one. Or if not, maybe you'd like to jot it down for the cake-eaters in your family.

The recipe calls for: one-half cup of fat.... 1 cup of sugar.... 1 cup of unsweetened, thick, smooth apple-sauce..... 1 teaspoon of soda.... 1 cup of chopped raisins.... 2 and one-half cups of sifted flour.... and then the spices -- one-half teaspoon of cloves, one-half teaspoon cinnamon and one-fourth teaspoon of nutmeg..... with one-half teaspoon of salt to top off the list.

And how to make this apple-sauce cake mixture? Like this: Cream the fat and sugar together. Add the apple sauce. Mix the raisins with one-half cup of the flour and sift the rest of the flour with the spices, soda and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the liquid mixture. Beat well, Pour into a greased pan. Bake in a very moderate oven (300 to 325 degrees Fahrenheit) for about 1 hour.

Listeners, that's apple-sauce cake -- a thrifty winter cake featuring two good fruits. And by the way, the recipe I just gave you makes enough for a family of 5 or 6.

Another interesting "cake" without eggs goes by the descriptive name of "eggless cup cakes." Eggless cup cakes are appetizing and economical. They're a nice kind of cake to serve with afternoon tea or to tuck into the school lunch. You can make them in muffin pans or in those little crinkled paper cups that stay on the cake until it is eaten. These cakes are sour-milk-and-soda cakes -- a mixture of fat, brown sugar, flour, sour milk, soda, salt and chopped nuts.

The recipe I'm familiar with comes from the foods people at the Bureau of Home Economics and makes about 20 small cakes.

Contrary to my usual custom, I'm going to break down and give you one more recipe. Here are the ingredients for these thrifty eggless cup-cakes: one-half cup of fat.... one and one-half cups of brown sugar.... 2 and one-half cups of sifted soft-wheat flour.... one-half teaspoon of salt.... 1 cup of clabbered milk.... one-half teaspoon of soda.... and 2 tablespoons of chopped nuts.

Here's the way you mix these ingredients: Cream the fat, then mix in thoroughly the brown sugar. Sift the flour, soda, and salt. Stir the milk into the dry ingredients. Add the nuts. And pour into greased muffin pans. Bake in a moderate oven for about 25 to 30 minutes -- or until lightly browned.

Probably the favorite representative of all the sweet-muffin kinds of cake is gingerbread. You can make it with sweet milk or sour milk. And you can serve it in a great variety of ways. Gingerbread and apple sauce is one famous winter combination. Hot gingerbread and cream cheese, ^{is good for a fancy dessert,} how about gingerbread and whipped cream, or with ice cream? Innumerable ways to serve that thrifty cake. There are even gingerbread mixtures that bake well in a waffle iron.

You probably have your own favorite recipe for gingerbread. So I won't have to talk about ingredients. But I do want to mention one important point for success in baking: Don't have your oven too hot. Molasses mixtures scorch easily. That's important not only in baking gingerbread but also in baking molasses cakes and cookies and waffles containing molasses. The foods people suggest baking gingerbread in a shallow pan in a moderate oven -- that is, 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Allow from 30 to 40 minutes for baking the usual-size sheet.

